Vol. 115 No. 4

Broadcasting Jul 25

Convention question mark...

Poor ratings raise questions of whether networks should reduce coverage of national political conventions. **PAGE 27.**

Opening the door more...

FCC proposes broadening waivers of its ban on telco-cable crossownership and liberalizing telco-cable system affiliation to allow phone companies to own up to 50% of publicly traded cable companies. **PAGE 31.**

Twenty-three years later...

FCC votes to allow RKO General to settle its 23-year-long comparative renewal cases and sell KHJ-TV Los Angeles and WHBQ(AM) Memphis. **PAGE 33.**

37/RADIO DAYS

Whether it is due to networks and rep companies increasing their involvement in auxiliary marketing activities, or producers and syndicators increasing their programing fare, BROADCASTING's special report on aural band finds industry in flux.

'Talknet's' Neil Myers at the mike

34/NBC'S CABLE START

CNBC (Consumer News and Business Channel) is name of NBC's cable programing venture debuting in early 1989. Consumer business news will be shown 24-hours-a-day, during week, with sports filling weekend schedule.

73/AFTER THE SPLIT

One week after announced plans to split MGM and United Artists, Lee Rich, chairman and chief executive officer of MGM/UA Communications, announces his resignation.

72/SECOND CHANCE

Continuing writers' strike has networks and producers scrambling to come up with original programing options for next fall—among alternatives are pilots that had previously been rejected outright or delayed indefinitely.

Previously rejected by CBS, 'Jake's Journey' is getting short-flight order from network.

74/CABLE MADE-FORS

USA Network says it will launch movie-of-the-week series next spring.

77/AM IMPROVEMENT

FCC proposes adoption of AM technical quality improvement standards, including industry-adopted NRSC audio standards developed by National Association of Broadcasters and Electronic Industries Association.

80/STEER CLEAR

According to comments from INTV, NCTA, MPAA and NAB, Copyright Office should stay on sidelines in battle over applying compulsory license to satellite superstations.

85/HOT BIRD

Murdoch's Sky Channel moves to Europe's leading DBS system.

88/AROUND-THE-WORLD BY SATELLITE

Since FCC opened up international earth station business in U.S. to competition four years ago, business of uplinking and downlinking international satellite signals has changed dramatically.

90/EXPERIMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

Bell Atlantic asks FCC for permission to build fiber optic plant in Perryopolis, Pa., for test of video and telephone services. Company is working with existing cable franchise operator there.

111/KEEPING THE CUSTOMER SATISFIED

When it comes to operations, James Gray, president of Columbus, Ohio-based Warner Cable, believes in fundamentals. Customer service, he says, "has to be unquestionably sound."

DEPARTMENTS

Cablecastings	79
Changing Hands	83
Closed Circuit	8
Datebook	22
Editorials	114
Fates & Fortunes	108
Fifth Estater	111
For the Record	92
In Brief	112
In Sync	76
Law & Regulation	80
Masthead	20
The Media	84
Monday Memo	24
On Radio	77
Open Mike	23
Programing	72
Riding Gain	78
Special Report	37
Stock Index	70
Washington Watch	81
Where Things Stand	10

Broadcasting (ISSN 0007-2028) is published 52 Mondays a year by Broadcasting Publications Inc., 1705 DeSales Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional offices. Single issue $2 except special issues $3.50 (50th Anniversary issue $10). Subscriptions, U.S. and possessions: one year $70, two years $135, three years $190. Canadian and other international subscribers add $20 per year. U.S. and possessions $235 yearly for special delivery, $100 for first-class. Subscriber's occupation required. Annually: *Broadcasting* □ *Cablecasting Yearbook* $110, *Across the Dial* $6.95. Microfilm of *Broadcasting* is available from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106 (35mm, full year $55). Postmaster, please send address corrections to *Broadcasting*, 1705 DeSales St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

BY THE NUMBERS

Summary of broadcasting and cable

BROADCASTING			
SERVICE	ON AIR	CP's[1]	TOTAL *
Commercial AM	4,913	287	5,199
Commercial FM	4,085	565	4,650
Educational FM	1,339	297	1,636
■ Total Radio	10,337	1,149	11,485
FM translators	1,585	435	2,020
Commercial VHF TV	543	18	561
Commercial UHF TV	501	200	701
Educational VHF TV	119	6	125
Educational UHF TV	215	30	245
■ Total TV	1,963	254	1,632
VHF LPTV	106	163	269
UHF LPTV	282	1,143	1,425
■ Total LPTV	388	1,306	1,694
VHF translators	3,067	109	3,176
UHF translators	2,179	348	2,527
ITFS[2]	250	114	364
Low-power auxiliary	824	0	824
TV auxiliary	7,430	205	7,635
UHF translator/boosters	6	0	6
Experimental TV	3	5	8
Remote pickup	12,338	53	12,391
Aural STL[3] & intercity relay	2,836	166	3,002

CABLE†	
Total subscribers	45,000,000
Homes passed	71,500,000
Total systems	8,000
Household penetration†	51.1%
Pay cable penetration	28.6%

* Includes off-air licenses. † Penetration percentages are of TV household universe of 88.6 million. [1] Construction permit. [2] Instructional TV fixed service. [3] Studio-transmitter link.

launch one by spring 1989.

TCI backing may indicate that high-power, Ku-band direct-to-home delivery of entertainment programing, already dominant mode of program distribution in Japan and moving fast in Europe, may be on verge of becoming reality in U.S. DBS's value rests on high-power signals delivered to small earth stations. Death of West Germany's start-up DBS bird, TV-Sat1, in February left two state-owned programers and two commercial programers without home. Other European DBS birds with similar, if not identical, design—Germans' TV-Sat2 and France's TDF-1—are still scheduled for Arianespace launch within next year (although French government postponed launch of TDF-1 from May 1988 until September 1988). European eyes are turned to less powerful, 16-channel Astra bird, owned by Luxembourg interests and scheduled for Arianespace launch next November.

Indecency

FCC, by 2-1 vote, took action June 23 against Media Central's KZKC-TV Kansas City, Mo., for station's May 1987 prime time broadcast of "Private Lessons," declaring film "indecent" and imposing $2,000 fine. It was first time television had been fined for indecency. Media Central has said it will not pay fine, and will take matter to court.

More important than penalty imposed on station is FCC explanation of what was indecent about film. That explanation, part of FCC's notice to Media Central, is intended to set guidelines for other broadcasters to follow in determining what is indecent and what is not.

In deciding to crack down on broadcast indecency last April, FCC adopted standard based on broader definition of indecency than seven dirty words at issue in 1978 *Pacifica* Supreme Court decision. At same time, FCC sent warning letters to three radio stations. At open meeting last November, FCC reaffirmed indecency policy, but, in doing so, created midnight-6 a.m. safe harbor during which "indecent" programing can be broadcast because of perceived minimal risk of children in audience.

Other than KZKC-TV case, only other indecency-related action FCC has taken since adoption of new policy is dismissal in April of indecency complaints against two television stations and three radio stations.

Meanwhile, oral arguments were presented in U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington in May by coalition of broadcast groups and citizen groups pressing First Amendment challenge of commission's anti-indecency policy. In earlier court brief defending policy, commission said it is "lawfully and reasonably" enforcing anti-indecency statute affirmed by Supreme Court in 1978 *Pacifica* case.

Low-Power TV

FCC's nine-day "window" for LPTV applications closed June 24, but not before between 1,500 and 1,800 applications were received.

It was second such filing window for LPTV in as many years. Window in June 1987 attracted 1,600 applications. FCC granted permits to bulk of them, and is now conducting series of lotteries to select tentative permittees for mutually exclusive ones. FCC will follow same process in processing latest batch.

Mergers

■Leveraged buyout tender offer has begun for Infinity Broadcasting at $30 per share. Of radio group owner's 10.1 million shares, fully diluted, roughly 4.3 million are held by senior executives, who formed WCK Acquisition to accomplish buyout. Some of 5.8 million shares being purchased are held by other management, who would receive combination of cash and stock in WCK Acquisition. WCK has already obtained bank and bridge loans and offer has been approved by Infinity board. Combined with assumption of debt, total value imputed to LBO is roughly $500 million. Class-action shareholder suits seeking to block LBO have been filed in Delaware Court of Chancelry. Tender offer expires July 26. ¶ Final round of bids for stock of RCA Cablesystems Holding Co. (U.S. subsidiary of Rogers Cablesystems International) were received last Tuesday, July 19, by Morgan Stanley & Co. Rumored bidders for systems serving roughly 500,000 subscribers include telco, Pactel; Jack Kent Cooke, and ATC. ¶ Definitive agreement has been signed to sell Metropolitan Broadcasting to Robert F.X. Sillerman. Announcement on June 29 indicated which groups affiliated with Sillerman will end up with stations. Plans call for Metropolitan president and chief executive officer, Carl Brazell Jr., to form new company, Command Communications, to purchase KJOI(FM) Los Angeles; KHOW(AM)-KSYY(FM) Denver; KRLD(AM) Dallas, and Texas State Networks for $145 million. Financing for Command is being sought through L.F. Rothschild and will include nonvoting equity interest to be held by Sillerman, who will also co-own WNEW(AM) New York, in conjunction with Westwood One. Remainder of Metropolitan stations, WNEW-FM New York; WMMR(FM) Philadelphia, and KTWV(FM) Los Angeles, will be co-owned by Sillerman and group owner, Legacy Broadcasting, in which

ing home satellite industry are considered dim. For starters, House bill (H.R.1885) passed Telecommunications Subcommittee by narrow vote, 13-11, indicating that action in parent Energy and Commerce Committee might not be forthcoming. Moreover, momentum behind measure is believed to have slowed because of announcement that National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (noncable distributor serving dish owners) had closed deals with five leading cable programers, move many observers feel will persuade lawmakers that congressional intervention is unnecessary. Moreover, NRTC, which is one of legislation's chief proponents, says it is no longer going to push for Hill action.

Despite NRTC deals, Senator Al Gore (D-Tenn.) believes there is still need for legislative action and is poised to move his satellite measure next week after Democratic convention. Both House and Senate bills would mandate that cable programers permit any qualified third party to distribute their services to backyard dish (TVRO) owners. Gore will offer measure as rider to another bill because of problems he encountered trying to gain time agreement to bring up legislation. Senate Communications Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) is legislation's chief opponent.

On other front, last week House Copyright Subcommittee passed legislation (H.R. 2848) to permit satellite distribution of broadcast signals—superstations—to backyard dish owners. However, bill's future is unclear because it has become entangled in jurisdictional dispute between copyright and House Energy and Commerce Committees (BROADCASTING, July 11). Commerce is likely to request referral once bill moves from parent Judiciary Committee, which will slow down legislative process at time when there are fewer than nine weeks on congressional calendar.

Syndex

■ At May 18 open meeting, FCC adopted unanimously new syndicated exclusivity rules empowering television stations to enforce exclusivity of their syndicated programing against cable systems.

FCC released order last week detailing rules. One point cleared up in order was liability for substitute programing. According to order, cable systems forced to delete programs from distant signal broadcasts may substitute other distant signals without incurring additional copyright liability. Order set Aug. 18, 1989, as effective date of rules. With release of order, opponents of rules may now begin challenging them in courts.

In adopting rules, which are similar to those dropped by agency eight years ago, FCC said they would end "the reign of re-runs" on cable and increase the diversity of programing on broadcast and cable. They would also make television marketplace fairer by allowing television station to contract for true exclusivity as cable programers do, FCC said.

Today, typical cable system imports several distant broadcast signals; some of syndicated programing on signals duplicates that on local television stations. Under syndex rules, stations can force cable systems to delete duplicative programing.

The FCC acknowledged that cable systems would suffer increased costs from having to delete and, if they wish, substitute programing, but said benefits outweight costs. What's more, FCC added several provisions to mitigate impact of rules. Rules will not take effect for one year and systems with 1,000 or fewer subscribers are exempt. Also, exclusivity in existing contracts may not be immediately enforceable.

Broadcasters applauded decision. They say syndex will restore equity within marketplace and that consumers will benefit.

Cable, on other hand, was not pleased. United Video, common carrier for superstations WGN-TV Chicago, WPIX(TV) New York and KTVT-TV Dallas, says it will appeal decision, and National Cable Television Association is promising to do same.

Unions

As the writers strike enters its 20th week, no word on new talks between producers and Writers Guild of America. Month ago, Writers Guild of America membership rejected 3 to 1, so-called "final offer" of Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. In that proposed agreement, producers took guild up on its compromise resolution tying residuals for one-hour shows in domestic syndication to total billings for those programs. However, in return, WGA wanted hike in foreign residuals that producers were unwilling to give. ■

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Broadcasting Publications Inc.
A Times Mirror Business Publication
Lawrence B. Taishoff, *president.*
Donald V. West, *vice president.*
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Founded 1931. *Broadcasting-Telecasting*® introduced in 1946. *Television*® acquired in 1961. *Cablecasting*® introduced in 1972 □ ® Reg U.S. Patent Office. □

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Tracking the fickle business of formats

While the major formats continue to attract listeners, programers look for ways to expand and freshen them to avoid audience burnout

Radio programers are not resting on their laurels. While station consultants and executives admit that there has been little change since last year in the performance of most of the top radio formats, they are not content. Instead of waiting for a ratings falloff, many said they are cautiously exploring new ideas to assure future success. The consultants and programers said the aging of the baby boom generation is the most significant demographic trend.

For radio consultant Kent Burkhart of Burkhart, Douglas and Associates, Atlanta, the stablity in radio's programing marketplace could have been predicted. "There hasn't been anything new on the horizon," he said, probably because of the continued demographic strength of adult contemporary, album-oriented-rock, oldies and contemporary hit formats.

Added Jeff Pollack, president of the Pollack Media Group, Pacific Palisades, Calif.: There is "no significant difference" to radio programing this year compared to last year, and "there's no substantial change in station ratings" in most markets.

Robert Hall, vice president of programing for Satellite Music Network speaks of radio programing in the same way, but like Burkhart and Pollack, his comments do not end there. Said Hall: "I don't think broadcasters are ready for change, but the audience is."

Hall said that listeners have been "screaming in target [focus] groups" about how radio owners "love to play it safe." Added Hall: "what's available [programing] is limited," leading SNM and others to look for new products.

□

The format many consultants speak of when they talk of programing's future is adult contemporary. And it's no wonder, since it's the fastest growing format in radio. In 1984, it was programed by 1,707 of the nearly 8,500 stations on the air. AC is now heard on 2,337 of radio's 11,000-plus stations.

While the leading radio format in 1988 (and in 1984) is country, the number of adult contemporary stations programed in major markets far outnumbers the number of country stations in major markets. While a major market can typically sustain one, possibly two, country stations, it can support a greater number of AC outlets.

One reason for the reasonably comfortable co-existance of those stations has to do with the format's nature. With a base of well-known rock hits and pop standards, each AC can combine elements of classic rock, oldies and top-40 to create a niche for itself, according to programers.

Burkhart added that over the next several years, AC will look to regain male listeners that have been estranged by what they perceive as the blandness of "light rock." Burkhart said that he is introducing a male adult contemporary (MAC) format to reach an audience neglected by mainstream AC.

"Most ACs are for women and males are shoved aside," he said. "Programers have historically disregarded males...People around the country have found that females are easier to transfer from CHR to AC. "Our research has seen a definite request by men 25-54 for newer album cuts from artists like Sting," Burkhart said. While the female AC listener is interested in melodic, though not necessarily new, music, Burkhart said audience testing and research indicate that for men "it's important to be on the leading edge. They want new material," they want to "stay on top of new music."

□

New age-oriented formats, including "The Wave," which took off last year on Metropolitan's KTWV(FM) Los Angeles, and the new age sound of WBMW(FM) Manasass, Va. (Washington), appear to have secured a solid niche in the marketplace. The format's selection of ethereal instrumentals and light jazz, now often classified as "new adult contemporary," has won numerous converts in the radio business, although it is programed by a relatively small number of stations.

Jim Duncan of Indianapolis-based American Radio said that the format has been "doubling shares" at many of the station's that have adopted it. Hall, whose company distributes "The Wave" to 11 stations, said he is encouraged by audience sampling of the format.

"At first they think it's strange, but as they listen, they like it," he said of the announcer-less format that features only brief news headlines and weather on the hour. Hall predicted that "one or two stations in every market" will be programing the format "in the next five years."

Gary Kneisley, general manager and vice president of operations at WNWV(FM) Elyria, Ohio (Cleveland), which airs "The Wave," said that in the recently released Birch spring book, WNWV(FM) posted a 3.5 12-plus metro share (Monday-Sunday, 6 a.m.-midnight). While that 12th-placed market share number is down from its ninth-placed 4.1 in the spring of 1987 (when the station was programing SMN's "Z-Rock"), Kneisley said that the format has brought in more advertising dollars because the format's audience profile is more attractive to advertisers.

Progressive Music Network, Minneapolis, has also found success with its version of "new adult contemporary," dubbed "The Breeze." Tom Pelissero, operations manager for "The Breeze," points to the success of WAVH(FM) Spokane, Wash., which went from a 2.0 12-plus metro share in the fall Arbitron book when it was airing "Format 41," to 3.5 in the spring. Pelissero said "The Breeze" primarily appeals to the 25-49 age group, with some listeners migrating from easy listening stations.

Still, some radio executives wonder about the success of "new AC," and question if it will have staying power.

□

Country music, to hear those involved in the format tell it, are finding it a challenge to

Following the formats

According to an analysis of BROADCASTING's yearbook database, there are currently 11,162 U.S. radio stations. Of these, 10,038 have reported information about their station's programing formats for the 1988 Yearbook.

BROADCASTING currently uses 65 separate format categories for station classification, a list that has been shaped by questionnaire responses over the years. The chart below gives a breakdown of the top 15 radio programing formats for the last four years, ranked in descending order (for 1988) of the number of stations carrying each format.

Format	1988	1987	1986	1985
Country	2,450	2,417	2,500	2,490
Adult contemporary	2,337	2,242	1,948	1,707
Top 40/CHR	950	912	1,046	1,032
Religious	948	886	796	732
MOR	802	921	1,213	1,417
Rock/AOR *	604	559	577	587
Diversified	596	597	637	662
Golden oldies	537	463	355	317
Easy listening	434	440	456	474
Classical	343	332	341	320
News **	333	299	287	282
Jazz	274	246	270	263
Spanish	211	210	207	176
Black	211	234	244	261
Urban contemporary	191	166	144	111

Radio formats are [illegible] * includes stations classified as progressive, ** station programing more than one format, *** includes stations classified as [illegible]

Raab

Mullins

McCoy

Kneisley

Hall

Burkhart

move beyond the traditional audience profile. While a recent Arbitron country listenership study commissioned by the Country Music Association showed that country listeners are more diverse than their "rural and older" sterotype might suggest, a number of programers said that their stations are finding a younger listener profile elusive.

Moon Mullins, a country consultant who is also the program director at WSM(AM) Nashville, said: "There might be certain markets" where country stations skew younger, "but on a national scale the audience is getting older." The 18-34 audience still belongs to Whitney Houston and George Michael, he said.

According to Joel Rabb, president of Joel Rabb Associates, New York, country radio is undergoing a "continued growth and evolution of acts that are appealing to younger demographics." Those acts appeal to country's core 35-44 audience as well as to the 25-34-year-olds. Rabb referred to acts such as The Judds, Dwight Yoakam, Randy Travis and Restless Heart as part of "a changing of the guard" in country radio.

But Rusty Walker, president of Rusty Walker Programing Consultants Inc., Iuka, Miss., said he is unsure of the ability of some of the new country acts to stake out a future for the format because they tend to have an older, more traditional sound reminiscent of Hank Williams Sr. and Roy Acuff, in spite of their stylish, younger appearance.

□

Anyone unsure of the attraction of the oldies format need only look at and listen to the numerous television and radio advertisements that use jingles incorporating older tunes or variations on them. Some programers said that the format is stretching its boundaries (especially in AC, where oldies are commonly in heavy rotation) in response to the aging of the baby-boom generation, but others referred to the "pure thing," the all-oldies format, as the most marketable commodity.

Joe McCoy, program director at oldies-formatted WCBS(FM) New York, said that the station is at its "hottest" since it started with the format in 1974, and he attributes that strength to baby boomers standing by the music they grew up with. WCBS(FM) was tied for fifth place in Arbitron's spring book with a 4.2 metro share, compared with a 3.7 last year. In men 25-54, the station was first with a 7.8 share, and with women 25-54 it was second with a 6.3.

□

Easy listening stations have also been changing in response to the aging of the baby boom generation. Bob Chandler, operations manager and head of programing at WGAY(FM) Washington, said that although there has been "some erosion" in easy listening's audience shares, it still remains a strong format. In Arbitron's spring book, WGAY ranked second in 12-plus metro share with a 6.6.

But Chandler added that in order to insure a future for his station, broadening the format's music selection will be necessary. Chandler said that inroads by "light" AC

Continues on page 56.

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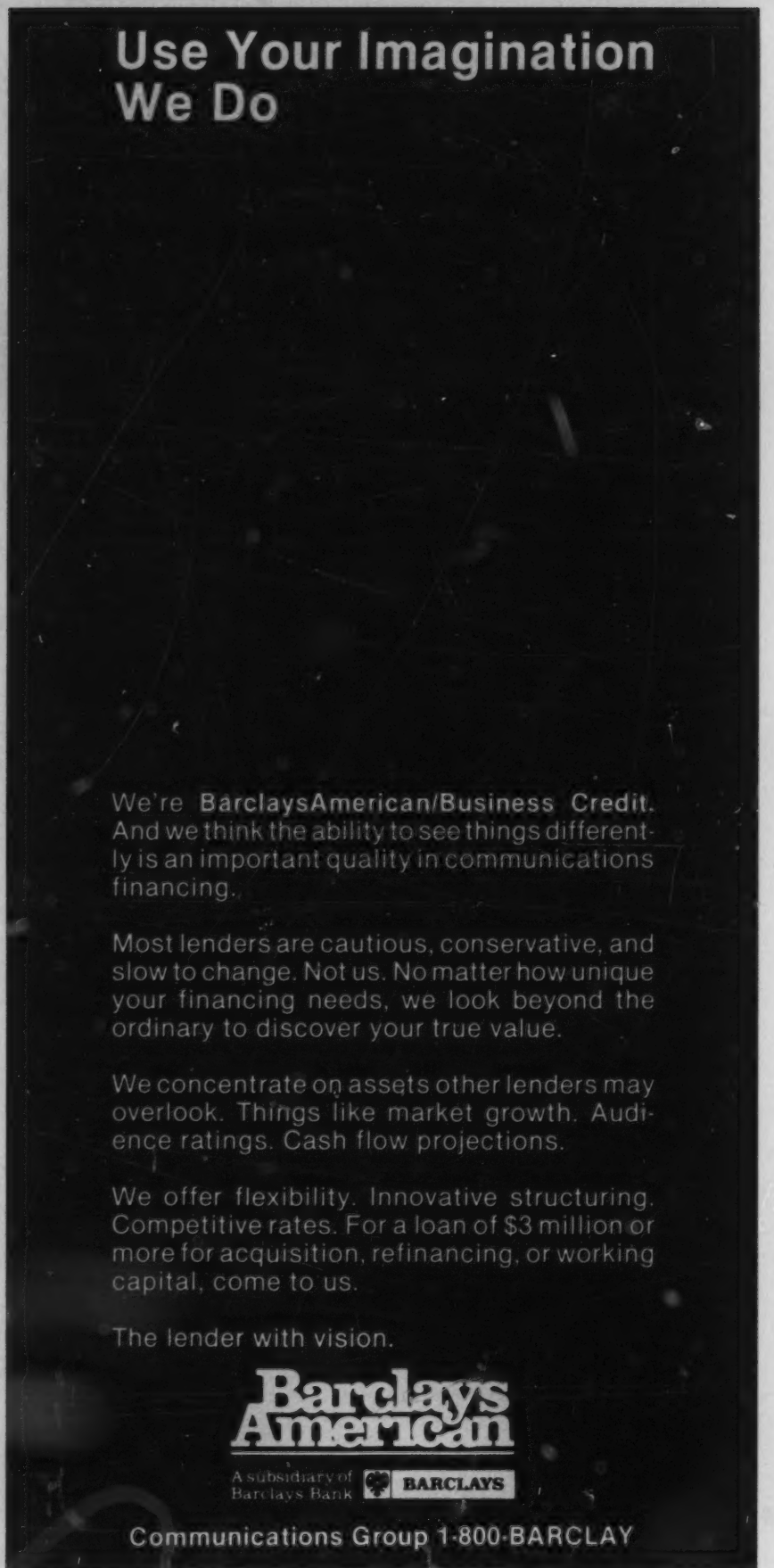
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(continues from page 54.)

formats into the easy listening audience have been one of the strongest incentives to reexamine the format.

"We're taking a different approach. It's not simply strings anymore," he said. Using a mix of music from the 1970's and '80s, Chandler said his stations' target is broadening beyond 45-55 year olds, to listeners in their late 30's and early 40's. Chandler termed the station's new programing slant "less mechanical" than in the past. "We're getting away from cover vocals" and instead are using original recordings by Lionel Ritchie and Ray Charles, among others.

Jim Opsitnik, president of Bonneville Broadcasting System, which supplies programing and consulting services to 166 easy listening stations, said that his research shows that easy listening will have to embrace elements of AC to survive. Opsitnik said that "testing the edges of listeners' tolerance level" with programing elements that appeal to the 35-44-year-old listeners has become a way of life for the format. Those new elements include vocal artists such as Gloria Estefan and the Bee Gees, as well as more news. "The format has evolved away from heavy orchestrals and choral groups" to more familiar songs, he said.

by Scott Barrett

Radio's syndication proliferation

The number of independent program suppliers has grown to a record high this year, as demonstrated in the following round-up. Offerings in 1988 include a wide variety of specialized programing that range from short-form health features to long-form music formats. Most are available to radio stations on a barter basis and are distributed primarily via satellite, disk and/or tape.

(Not included in the following capsules are 24-hour programing services, which appear on page 55, and independent program suppliers who solely produce long-form shows that are cleared and sold by the major radio networks.)

All Star Radio, Los Angeles, is providing stations with a "full comedy programing service," said managing partner Merrill Barr, with the introduction of a weekly comedy newsletter and consulting services to stations. All Star introduced *Daily Comedy Exclusive* last year, featuring Ron Stevens and Joy Grdnic, who also perform the company's *Radio Hotline* and *Comedy Drop-Ins*. *Exclusive* has taken off, said Barr, and is now carried by 68 stations. The duo has consistently delivered seven 15-60-second bits per week on topical subjects, said Barr, two above the minimum.

The weekly newsletter is aimed at helping local disk jockeys with their comedy routines. All Star also does critiques of local on-air material and makes Stevens available on a weekly basis for consultation with stations.

All Star introduced *The Guy Who Talks Fast* last year. It features John Moschitta Jr., who gained fame as a fast-talking actor on